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ABSTRACT

Two national surveys found that the supervision needs of practicum students, interns, and practitioners in school psychology were underemphasized in the training of counselors. This paper focuses on the M. P. Wilbur and others (1991) Structured Group Supervision Model (SGSM) and how it has been used with a variety of supervisees in counselor education and counseling psychology, as well as practicum students in school psychology. The SGSM comprises five, highly structured phases. In Phase 1, Request for Assistance, a supervisee introduces a problem or difficult case and asks for specific help with the case. Phase 2, Questioning and Identification of Focus, involves a round of questioning by group members. Phase 3, Feedback and Statements, permits group members to provide suggestions to the presenter. Phase 4, the Pause Period, allows those present to reflect upon suggestions, and Phase 5, Supervisee Response, follows with the presenter reacting to the group's suggestions and evaluating them. Finally, Phase 6, the optional Discussion Period, permits the group to reflect upon and discuss the process the group followed in conducting the case. Groups typically complete a case in 60-90 minutes. Although SGSM's roots lie in counseling and psychotherapy, the process is well suited to a variety of supervision issues in school psychology. (RJM)

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Structured Group Supervision:

A Model for Supervisors of

School Psychology Students and Practitioners

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Structured Group Supervision:

A Model for Supervisors of School Psychology Students and Practitioners

As the field of school psychology expands, the need for supervision of practicum students, interns, and practitioners increases (Knoff, 1986). Such supervision may be university-based and conducted by trainers, or it may field-based and done by practitioners. Relative to other applied specialities, school psychology virtually has ignored issues of supervision. A recent search of the PSYLIT database over the past 15 years revealed that supervision in school psychology had 34 entries compared with 100, 125, and 468 for counseling psychology, clinical psychology, and counselor education, respectively. Moreover, two national surveys (Ross & Goh, 1993; Zins, Murphy, & Wess, 1989) of school psychologists concluded that supervision was underemphasized relative to its importance in the formation of students and practitioners.

Clearly, school psychology would profit from well developed supervision procedures that are (a) applicable to practica, internships, and post-degree work and (b) adaptable to either university- or field-based settings.

Structured Group Supervision Model

This presentation focuses on the Structured Group Supervision Model (SGSM; Wilbur, Wilbur-Roberts, Morris, Betz, & Hart, 1991). The SGSM's earliest roots can be traced to the supervision of psychotherapists two decades ago (Betz, 1973). More recently, however, the SGSM has been used with a variety of supervisees in counselor education and counseling psychology (Wilbur, Wilbur-Roberts, Hart, Morris, & Betz, 1994) as well as practicum students in school psychology (Bahr, 1995).

The SGSM comprises five phases that are highly structured and involve an entire group (supervisor and supervisees). (An outline and description of the SGSM is found of page 4 of this document.) Phase 1, Request for Assistance, begins with one supervisee introducing a problem or difficult case and asking for specific help with the case. Phase 2, Questioning and

Identification of Focus, involves a round of questioning by group members. Phase 3, Feedback and Statements, permits group members to provide suggestions to the presenter. Phase 4, the Pause Period, allows the present to reflect upon suggestions, and Phase 5, Supervisee Response, follows with the presenter reacting to the group's suggestions and evaluating them. In Phase 5, the presenter tells the group what suggestions will be attempted and why. Finally, Phase 6, the optional Discussion Period, permits the group to reflect upon and discuss the process the group followed in conducting the case. Using the SGSM, a group typically completes one case in 60-90 minutes.

Benefits of SGS

There are multiple benefits of the SGSM. Although its roots are in counseling and psychotherapy, the SGSM is well suited to a variety of supervision issues in school psychology; problems related to assessment, consultation, intervention, or interactions with other professionals are a few examples that the can be addressed via the SGSM. The structured nature of the SGSM provides a consistent, though flexible, framework for supervisors and students. Because all supervisees participate in problem-solving, the process maximizes the resources provided to the presenter, and the expectation of participation by every group member increases the sense of shared responsibility with which supervisees approach supervisory sessions. Finally, and not of least importance, the SGSM is a field-tested, empirically validated supervision model (Wilbur et al., 1994).

Structured Group Supervision Model

Phase 1: Request for Assistance Statement

A supervisee (the "presenter") selects a problem and presents it to the group (i.e., other supervisees and the supervisor). The problem may be a difficult case, challenging event, or critical incident from the practicum experience. For example, the presenter might discuss an incident that occurred during individual assessment with a student, an interaction with a staff member (i.e., supervisor, teacher, administrator, etc.), or an experience working with a small or large group of students,

The presenter closes Step 1 with a clear statement indicating what assistance is being requested.

Phase 2: Questioning Period and Identification of Focus

Group members respond by developing as many of the dimensions of the problem as needed to increase their understanding of the context of the situation. Group members ask the presenter questions using a round-robin technique (one question per person at a time). The questions are designed to obtain breadth and depth of the problem, the setting, and the overall context of the situation. The presenter is active in providing the necessary information and backgroud to facilitate this understanding. During Step 2, suggestions are not permitted.

This step ends when group members exhaust all of their questions.

Phase 3: Feedback Statements

Using the round-robin technique, group members provide suggestions and insights to the presenter. During Step 3, the person presenting the problem is not permitted to respond. The presenter may take notes, but verbal responses are not permitted. This procedure is used to reduce the effects of the "Yes, but..." response.

This step ends when group members exhaust all of their suggestions.

Phase 4: Pause Period

There is a pause for the presenter to reflect on the comments provided by group members. The group remains quiet during this time.

Phase 5: Supervisee Response

The presenter responds to the suggestions and insights by discussing which ones are helpful, likely to be used, and why.

Phase 6: Discussion Period (Optional)

This optional phase allows the group to reflect upon and discuss the process of working together on the case just completed.

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PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- **NASP:** 1 hour face-to-face supervision per week for the first 3 years of practice
  Continued supervision or peer review on a regular basis

- **APA:** Nondoctoral school psychologists should receive face-to-face supervision 1 hour per week by doctoral level school psychologist at <u>all</u> times

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REALITY CHECK

- Majority of school psychologists receiving supervision do so because of employer mandates **BUT** less than 25% actually receive supervision (Zins et.al., 1989)

- Approximately one third of school psychologists with less than 3 years experience receive supervision that meets NASP recommendations (Ross & Goh, 1993)

- Less than 40% of <u>all</u> practicing school psychologists receive supervision that meets NASP recommendations (Ross & Goh, 1993)

- Is supervision valued?

  - Over 95% of school psychologists being supervised believe practitioners **<u>should</u>** receive supervision (Zins et.al., 1989)

  - Those receiving supervision value it more (Ross & Goh, 1993)

- The majority of current supervision practices involve review of psychoeducational reports and case review (Zins et.al., 1989)

OVERVIEW

- 5 Phases
  - Optional discussion of process at end
- 8-10 supervisees
- Roles
  - Facilitator
  - Presenter
  - Group
- Provide outline of process
- Approximately 10-15 min per phase

PHASE 1
Request for Assistance Statement

- Purpose
  - To provide the group with information
- Facilitator
  - Asks presenter to begin
  - Assures presenter is ONLY one to speak
- Presenter
  - Presents background information
- Group
  - Takes notes
- End with presenter's specific question or statement

PHASE 2
Questioning & Identification of Focus

- Purpose
  - Gather information & clarify misconceptions
- Facilitator
  - Monitors time
  - Assures only 1 question per person
- Presenter
  - Answers questions
- Group
  - Asks questions in round-robin style
- End when questions/time are exhausted

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PHASE 3
Feedback Statements

- Purpose
  - Provide suggestions & insights
- Facilitator
  - Monitors time
- Presenter
  - Takes notes
- Group
  - Suggestions in round-robin style
- End when suggestions are exhausted

PHASE 4
Pause Period

- Purpose
  - Gives time to assimilate suggestions
- Facilitator
  - Asks group to pause
- Presenter
  - Looks over notes
- Group
  - Remains silent
- End after a few minutes

PHASE 5
Supervisee Response

- Purpose
  - To notify if insights were helpful
- Facilitator
  - Permits presenter as the only speaker
- Presenter
  - Responds to suggestions
- Group
  - Remains silent
- End when presenter is finished

PHASE 6
Optional: Discussion Period

- Purpose
  - To provide for orderly input & processing
- Activities
  - Free discussion by all members

Commonly Asked Questions about the SGS Model

- Is the SGS model an efficient way for supervisors to use their time with supervisees?
- What role does the supervisor play in the group discussion?
- Does the SGS model provide adequate feedback for supervisees?

Practicum Students' Perceptions

Concerns :

- The role of the supervisor
- Interaction in Phase II
- Facilitator less attentive

Strengths :

- no interruptions
- participation
- positive atmosphere
- critical review of information
- relieves pressure on presenter
- opportunity to facilitate
- pause period
- dominating the discussion